The Euben Research Fund for Students in Political Theory and Ethics

During his long and distinguished career, Dr. J. Peter Euben was a fierce defender of the importance of thinking ethically as a key component of education. Yet Professor Euben understood that “ethics is often a matter of questions that do not yield answers or solutions, but further questions.”

An avid scholar of Greek political theory, Professor Euben summed up the significance of thinking about ethics by reference to Socrates: “What we remember about Socrates is less his arguments than the kind of life he led.” By asking the question about what makes the good life, however, Euben addressed us not only as individuals making specific choices; he addressed the exercise and impact of collective power, and the limitations and costs of prevailing definitions of justice.

Professor Euben was an extraordinarily gifted teacher whose pedagogical style pulled students into vibrant dialogues that uncovered unasked questions of the most important kind. Ethical thinking was thus a collaborative exercise in shaping our choices, and so our lives together. As such, thinking about ethics, and thinking about the meaning and practice of democracy were inseparably related.

At Duke, Professor Euben worked to help establish, then nurture, the Kenan Institute for Ethics so that students might be challenged to, in his words, “think about their lives with depth and passion”—whatever subject they chose to study. He believed that this questioning spirit held the promise of cultivating humanistic values in students that would guide not only their specific life choices after graduation, but their entire orientation toward the political world.

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The Kenan Institute for Ethics, in keeping with the wishes of the Euben family, seeks to honor Professor Euben’s memory by creating the J. Peter Euben Political Theory and Ethics Fund to provide research and professional development support for graduate students (and on occasion, selective undergraduates) studying political theory and ethics. Financial need is a consideration.

By contributing to the future of political theory and ethics scholarship, teaching, and practice, your gift to this fund is one of the most significant ways you can honor Professor Peter Euben’s commitments to education, to collaborative thinking, and to democratic politics.

If you would like to support the Euben Fund using a credit card, please use the following link to make your gift: https://www.gifts.duke.edu/EubenFundforEthics.

If you would like to support the Euben Fund with a personal check, please send it to: The Kenan Institute for Ethics, 1364 Campus Drive, Box 90432 Durham NC 27708

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